



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2011**

Chinese (Mandarin)

46704

(Specification 4670)

Unit 4: Writing

Report on the Examination

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General Comments

From a relatively limited entry for the first year, there were examples of work of excellent quality, showing evidence of thorough preparation for the component. Students were able to produce original and detailed responses to some interesting tasks, offering points of view together with justification and using a range of complex structures with a high degree of accuracy. Many centres chose to prepare students by using AQA exemplar tasks for Writing taken from the specification and the outcome was pleasing. It was encouraging to see some imaginative and ambitious tasks, although some centres chose to use tasks which made it difficult for students to apply different time references other than the default tense used. Titles seen were varied: *Holidays*, *School*, *Home and Environment*, *Leisure*, *Lifestyles* and *Teenage Issues*. These were handled well. Some students provided little time reference evidence, mainly using the present tense.

The following suggestions are offered to encourage centres to maximise attainment:

- Centres are reminded that task titles need to be carefully thought out so that students are writing fully relevant responses. The task should be a phrase or question. One word for the title (ie *Holidays*) followed by detailed bullet points makes it difficult to mark. The title and not the bullet points are what the students should be writing about. The title can be about any subject but should be focused. The bullet points are there as a guide to ensure that appropriate language is elicited and should not, ideally, be phrased as questions, as students sometimes answer the bullet points without ensuring that their piece of writing flows as a stand-alone piece of text.
- Some students were awarded lower marks because their tasks did not offer the opportunity to display the features required for the various assessment categories. Centres should make students aware of the assessment criteria and in all writing assignments should encourage them to ensure their piece is fully relevant and contains opinions and, according to their ability, justification. Where possible, students should be encouraged to write longer sentences and to use a range of time references. It is the first entry for GCSE Chinese this year and controlled assessment is entirely new to most centres. As teachers become more familiar with the criteria for assessment and the new specification, it is likely that performance will improve.
- Centres are encouraged to study the exemplar materials on the AQA website in terms of content and assessment (there will be additional exemplars in autumn 2011) and to make use of the Controlled Assessment Adviser allocated to them. Details of Controlled Assessment Advisers are sent out each year and can be obtained from the subject team using the MFL mailbox mfl@aqa.org.uk.

Task Planning Forms

These are optional. Many students did not use Task Planning Forms and were able to produce good pieces of work, but students who did produce Task Planning Forms found them helpful and used them effectively. Centres are reminded that task titles need to be on the Task Planning Forms. Very few students exceeded the maximum of 40 words/characters which was pleasing.

Some centres, sent Task Planning Forms with conjugated verbs included. These must always be obliterated. Some students had simply put a line through them and they could still be easily seen which is not acceptable. Other students had not obliterated them at all. Centres should remind students that work containing conjugated verbs visible on the Task

Planning Form will not be credited and that therefore they could be disadvantaged, particularly if the conjugated verb is used often in the task. It is essential that these are checked by the teacher prior to the task being produced.

Centres are reminded that for the June 2012 examination and beyond, visuals are no longer permitted on Task Planning Forms.

Drafts

A number of things need to be emphasised:

- Students are not *required* to write a draft at Stage 2
- If a draft is produced, it must be done under direct teacher supervision, must **not** be commented upon and must be kept in school. This also applies to partially-completed drafts
- At Stage 2, students have access to all resources (**except the teacher**) to inform their planning and preparation. This may include, from Stage 1, their own (corrected) written work, worksheets, text books, on-line resources (other than translation software) etc. All of this is potentially accessible, within the 6 hours, in school and at home.

Use of Dictionaries

As might be expected, effective use of bilingual dictionaries was variable. It is advised that students are trained in the use of bilingual dictionaries in order to avoid misuse and potential loss of marks.

Assessment

Content

Centres are advised to study the criteria for assessment and ensure that preparation for tasks matches what is required for each band of marks. Where able students were not scoring 13–15 marks, it was because the responses were not always **fully** relevant and they were not always conveying information clearly (and this is where Accuracy can impact on Content). The key phrase in the 10–12 band is ‘convey **a lot** of information clearly’ and in the 7–9 band ‘**quite a lot** of information clearly communicated’. Students who scored at the 4–6 band and the 1–3 band generally produced short pieces of work containing errors that impeded communication.

Range of Language

Where students scored well, there was evidence of good preparation and familiarity with the production of complex sentences and a variety of time references. However, errors in word order, tense formation and comparisons, inappropriate use of conjunctions and adjectives and inaccuracies in character writing were common, with some students clearly having little understanding of linguistic structure. It is in these areas that a lack of precision and inappropriate vocabulary prevents students from scoring marks in the top

bands. Students who appropriately scored 5–6 used simple conjunctions effectively and this should be encouraged.

Accuracy

The mark of 3 or 4 was the most common mark awarded. Many students who scored 3 had the ability to produce language that communicated a message so that ‘the intended meaning was clear’ but in many cases errors were not generally occurring in complex sentences. Word order or sentence structures influenced by English and lack of particles in perfect tense formation was often seen and errors in the character writing often impeded communication. Other students who scored 4 tended to have similar mistakes repeated, such as using ‘是’ when adjectives were used as stative verbs or adding ‘了’ to all verbs when a past event was described.

Administration

Centres are encouraged:

- to collate each student’s work – ie the two tasks - together with the Candidate Record Form and the Task Planning Form. The use of treasury tags to keep portfolios together is preferred as paper clips and plastic wallets cause significant handling problems
- to make sure the examiner receives the full Controlled Assessment Task sheet relevant to the student or group. Marking cannot begin until the examiner knows what the students are writing about
- to remind students to write neatly as poor handwriting can affect marks if it affects communication
- to send the work in the same student order as on the Attendance List, as would be done for a terminal examination paper
- to check that the students have correctly filled in **and signed** the Candidate Record Form and the Task Planning Form (if used).
- to ensure students have written the following information on each piece of work
 - centre number
 - student number
 - student name
 - component code (eg 46704)
 - task title
- to remind teachers that they should not write on the students’ work (ie marks they may have awarded)
- to adhere to the deadline of 7 May by which all materials should be sent to the AQA examiner. The following items must be sent to the AQA examiner:
 - students’ work (2 tasks per student) clearly labelled as Task 1 and Task 2
 - the task sheets
 - Task Planning Forms (if used)
 - Candidate Record Forms (signed)

Further support

Three further points to provide help to centres:

- the guidance provided to examiners is published at the end of this report for your information
- at the time of publication of results, centres will receive the total mark out of 60 for Unit 4 as well as the UMS score for the unit. In order to access the breakdown of the mark out of 60 (ie the mark out of 30 per task and the mark awarded for each assessment criterion), centres must register with e-AQA and use the Enhanced Results Analysis (ERA). It is only through ERA that a breakdown of marks will be made available
- further examples of completed writing tasks with marks and commentaries from the 2011 examination will be available in the Teacher Resource Bank on the AQA MFL website in the autumn term.

Advice to Students

Below is some advice you may wish to provide to your students:

- Once you know the title of your task and your teacher has given you the bullet points to use in your task, think carefully about how you intend to write about each one and prepare to write as much as you can and as clearly and accurately as you can
- It will improve your mark if you can use a variety of vocabulary and structures, if you can express opinions clearly and, when you can, justify these opinions by giving a reason. It also helps if you can use different tenses by saying what you did in the past, and/or what you are going to do or will do in the future, for example
- You are allowed to use a Task Planning Form on which you may write up to 40 words/characters (in the target language and/or English) and you may use this form at Stage 3 (once it has been checked by your teacher). Be sure to spell words accurately on this sheet so that they will be accurate when you write up your piece of work. It might be wise to include the same order of bullet points on your Task Planning Form as the teacher gave you on the Task Sheet and then jot down a few words next to each one. If you are worried you may forget what a target language word means, you could write the English translation next to it, as long as the English word is included in your final count. Remember not to use conjugated verbs (parts of verbs in whichever tense); if you want to jot down verbs, you can only include infinitives
- You are allowed to use a dictionary when you write up your piece of work. You should use this to look up occasional words, but do not waste too much time looking up lots of words; you only have 60 minutes and you need to write as full a response as you can. Remember that your dictionary is likely to contain verb tables and you could always use it to check that you have written the part of the verb/the tense of the verb accurately
- Be sure that everything you write is relevant to the title
- Try to write as much as you can about each bullet point but keep an eye on the clock. Remember you only have 60 minutes. If you follow the order of the bullet points provided, this should bring a well-organised structure to your piece, but if time is

running out you might choose to round off the piece neatly even if you have to cut short what you were intending to write.

GUIDANCE NOTES

The following guidance, provided to examiners during the marking period, is reproduced below for information.

1. Task Planning Forms (TPF)

If more than 40 words/characters have been used, examiners will ignore when awarding a mark, the parts of the student's response (ie the phrases or clauses) which use words/characters noted on the TPF beyond the first 40.

If a conjugated verb appears on the TPF, examiners will ignore the clause(s) where that verb is used when awarding a mark for Range of Language and Accuracy. If the sentence (with the conjugated verb discounted) still communicates, then it may be counted towards the mark for Content. The same applies to the use of codes.

Visuals on Task Planning Forms are permitted for the last time in June 2011 and must not appear on Task Planning Forms in June 2012 and beyond.

2. Exactly what do examiners mark?

- They mark the student's response **to the title**.
- They do **not** mark a response to the bullet points which have the status of guidance. The student may choose to ignore the bullet points completely.
- The response must be relevant to the title.

3. Must the title relate directly to the Contexts defined in the specification?

No. The title can be anything.

4. How do examiners identify the title?

- The title is the task.
- The task and the scene-setting may seem blurred or merged together. The focus is the task.
- See examples in *Additional Exemplar Tasks: Controlled Assessment Writing and Speaking* on the AQA website within the Teacher Resource Bank for your language at <http://web.aqa.org.uk/qual/newgcse/languages.php?id=11&prev=10>, where the task and scene setting are clearly separated

5. What is a relevant response?

- The response must be relevant to the task.
- Students are not penalised for not responding to the scene setting details.

6. And what if there is a significant amount of irrelevant material?

- It would affect the mark for CONTENT.
- Only the material which is relevant should still be assessed for RANGE OF LANGUAGE and ACCURACY.

7. What if a student has omitted an entire aspect of the title?

A student with the task 'Home, local area and special occasions' who writes nothing about home area, for example, could be considered to have completed two thirds of the task. The piece could therefore be eligible for the 10-12 band for Content, assuming the piece fulfils the criteria for that band in other ways. This would still allow the student access to all mark bands for language.

8. What if there is a significant duplication of material across the two pieces of work submitted?

- The same material cannot be credited twice.
- Incidental and occasional overlap do not count as duplication.

9. What if it is clear the student's entire response is identical (ie exactly the same, word for word) to model answers in a textbook or to the wording of tasks from other students at the same centre?

The work would be referred to AQA's Irregularities/Malpractice Department.

10. Does the number of words affect assessment?

- The quality not the quantity of work affects the assessment outcome.
- 100-250 words across both tasks if aiming at grades D-G, 200-300 if aiming at grades A*- C, is for **guidance** only.
- Obviously, the shorter the assignment, the more difficult it becomes to meet the upper bands of assessment criteria for CONTENT (and therefore other categories).
- There is no *upper* limit on the number of words. The whole piece will be read and marked by the examiner.

11. How does the CONTENT mark affect the marks for RANGE OF LANGUAGE and ACCURACY?

Content Mark	Maximum Mark for Range of Language	Maximum Mark for Accuracy
0	0	0
1–3	1–4	1-2
4–6	1–6	1-3
7–9	1–8	1-4
10–12	1–10	1-5
13–15	1–10	1-5

12. The criteria for assessment

(a) CONTENT

The criteria for CONTENT refer to ideas, points of view and, in the 4-6 band, opinions. In terms of assessment, how are they viewed?

They are all viewed as one notion. Ideas, points of view and opinions are the same for assessment purposes. In terms of evidence, there must be more than one instance of this feature.

How do examiners decide between the 3 marks available for CONTENT in each mark band?

If the descriptor fits the piece exactly, then the examiner will award the middle mark in the band. If there is strong evidence of the descriptors and the examiner had been considering the band above, the highest of the three marks would be awarded. If there is just enough evidence and the examiner had been considering the band below, then the lowest mark in the band would be awarded.

13-15 marks

- Students provide a **fully relevant** and **detailed** response with **almost all** information conveyed **clearly** and **developed**.
- They must offer ideas / opinions / points of view (minimum 2) and at least two of them must be explained or justified.
- The piece should have a well organised structure, ie a sound ordering of ideas but **not** necessarily a formal essay structure or an introduction, conclusion, etc.

10-12 marks

- The response will be **mostly** relevant and **a lot** of information will still be provided and conveyed **clearly** and will **generally** be developed.
- There is a requirement to give **and explain** ideas / opinions / points of view (minimum 2)

7-9 marks

- The response will be **generally** relevant with **quite a lot** of information conveyed **clearly**.
- There will still be evidence of an ability to **develop** ideas.
- There is a requirement to give opinions / points of view (minimum 2).

4-6 marks

- The response is **limited** but **some** relevant information will be conveyed.
- There will be **some development** of basic ideas.
- There is a requirement to give opinions (minimum 2). These could be very simple, eg: 'I like Chinese. I like Spanish. China is good.' = 3 simple opinions.

1-3 marks

- The response is **very limited** with **little** relevant information conveyed.
- There will be **no real structure**.

0 marks

- No relevant information is communicated in a coherent fashion. If zero is awarded for Content, zero must also be awarded for Range of Language and Accuracy.

(b) RANGE OF LANGUAGE

What evidence is required for “verb tenses used successfully” in the 9-10 band?

- There must be a combination of a minimum of two different time references.
- The use of the present tense plus time expression to refer to the past or future count as a different time reference.
- The expressions with 了 to imply imminent action ‘soon’, ‘just about to’ (i.e. 要...了, 就要...了, 快...了, 快要...了, 就快...了) count as future time reference, similarly a construction using conditional to refer to future (i.e. 如果..., somebody就...).
- A verb with the aspect marker 过 to indicate past experience of an action counts as the past time reference (i.e. 我去过中国).
- In a given piece of work, there should be a minimum of one instance of a time reference used which is other than the default time tense used.
- To fulfil the descriptor: “verb tenses are used successfully,” there needs to be evidence that the candidate can communicate messages successfully in more than one time reference. There may be minor errors but provided they do not prevent communication they can be credited.
- The use of different time references does not guarantee a mark in the 9-10 band.
- There is no requirement for evidence of 3 time references used across both pieces of work.

In the two top bands what would provide evidence of ‘more complex sentences?’

- A range of different structures leading to more varied, longer sentences.
- Subordinating conjunctions could be one way of producing more complex sentences but are not an absolute requirement. Comparisons, for example, could also provide sound evidence.

In the 5-6 band, what would constitute evidence for “attempts at longer sentences using appropriate linking words?”

This will often mean repeated dependence on simple connectives such as ‘和’, ‘可是’, though ‘因为’ will also be found fairly frequently when candidates attempt to explain ideas and points of view.

2 marks

- **Many errors.**
- Mistakes **often impede communication.**
- Verbs are **rarely accurate.**

1 mark

- **Frequent errors.**
- Mistakes **regularly impede communication.**
- **Limited understanding** of basic linguistic structures.

(c) ACCURACY

Is there an implicit requirement for different tenses to be in evidence?

No. Range of tenses is assessed under RANGE OF LANGUAGE. Examiners do not consider range of tenses when assessing Accuracy.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

Convert raw or scaled marks into marks on the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) by using the link below:

UMS conversion calculator: www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion.